

DATE: January 27, 2016

Instructional Quality Commission

Email: HSSframework@cde.ca.gov

Re: Implementation of AB199 and Inclusion of WWII in the Philippines in the History-Social Sciences Curriculum Framework

To State Superintendent Tom Torlakson, Dr. Thomas Adams, Members of the Instructional Quality Commission and State Board of Education:

We endorse Bataan Legacy Historical Society's efforts to implement AB199 and to include the role of the Filipinos during World War II in the Philippines in the history-social sciences curriculum framework for Grade 10 and 11.

It has been over 70 years since the Philippines (U.S. colony from 1898-1946) and its people were called upon to put up a gallant fight against the Empire of Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. The Filipino and American soldiers of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (USAFPE), who suffered massive diseases and starvation as a result of the Europe First Policy, were able to disrupt the timetable of the Imperial Japanese Army of 52 days and defended the Bataan peninsula for 99 days. After the conditional release of majority of the Filipino soldiers, they joined the guerrilla movements which laid down the foundation for the eventual liberation by the Allied Forces. By the end of the war, one million civilians had perished in the Philippines and its capital, Manila, once considered as the Pearl of the Orient, became the most ravaged city in the world next to Warsaw, Poland.

Despite their great sacrifice, the Filipino soldiers who served equally with their American brothers under the command of USAFFE were denied their veterans' rights and benefits after the passage of the First and Second Rescission Acts in 1946. To this date, these rights have not been fully-restored and a majority of these WWII Filipino soldiers have passed on without seeing justice prevail.

Today, we have an opportunity to set the record straight by putting this seminal point of WWII history in the curriculum framework of California. It will be the first time that American students in high school will learn of this great sacrifice made for the freedom that we are enjoying today. California will lead the country in doing this and hopefully, the rest of the nation will follow. We urge you and the State Board of Education to fully implement AB199 as well as to ensure that this historical framework will accurately portray the sacrifices of the Filipino and American soldiers and an entire nation during World War II.

We support the suggestions that have been requested by Bataan Legacy Historical Society on the Second Field Review Draft that was approved by the IQC on November 20, 2015 and urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Zenaida Crisostomo Slemph

Vice President, National Philippine Scouts Heritage Society

Daughter of a Bataan Death March Survivor